

HILDESHEIM MAIL

This is a beautiful time of year here – we know winter is coming, but the colors of fall are all around us! As the leaves turn yellow or red and then brown, one thought comes – where has time gone? It seems like just a few days ago when we were returning from a busy trip to the States! We are so thankful for our time there. It was a special treat to see so many of you!

After returning to Germany, life didn't wait for us to get over jet lag – school started two days later, as well as theater rehearsals for Julia and basketball for Daniel and Julia (and for Don as coach). Since the sports teams here are run through clubs, there aren't the time limits like in the States.

This fall has been full of activities around Germany. In September Don went to the European Singles Retreat at the Gemunden Bible camp near Frankfurt for the second time as the guest teacher – wouldn't be there otherwise! The topic was "Walking in Sunshine", based on 1. John 1:7. There were about 30 participants who came from five different European countries for the weekend. It was encouraging for me to see these people make the effort to travel several hours just to share in the singing, learning, fellowship, and fun of the weekend.



It is our prayer that the lessons given will be used by the Lord to strengthen and encourage His followers as they returned to their home countries.

Two weeks later Don and our co-worker Kyle Bratcher headed to the German men's



retreat, a week-long gathering with men coming from all the German-speaking countries (Germany, Austria and Switzerland). This year the planners decided to introduce some new ideas into the schedule, and Don and Kyle were asked to lead a morning "Module" about "Agape love in the family", which included a talk followed by small group discussions, with the small groups' results then presented to the whole group. We were

encouraged by the openness experienced in the small groups, and we hope and pray that the fathers, husbands, sons, etc. were encouraged to return home and pass on the agape love which they receive from Christ!

A lot of our work involves giving. So every year, we plan in a week to go to a seminar during the fall school break, in order to be on the receiving end. This October we went to the

Bible camp at Gemunden to take part in the fall conference sponsored by the Ministry of Theological Education, which is run by Dr. Rick Oster from the Harding graduate school. This year's topic was "The Story of God", taught by John Mark Hicks from Lipscomb University, a challenging and uplifting topic by a gifted teacher. We are very thankful for these seminars, have been regulars for a number of years. For the past 17 years, Bill Wilson, missionary in Cologne, Germany, has been responsible for planning these conferences from this side of the ocean. He is retiring, and has asked Kyle, Don and another young German to take over planning the seminars, so that these seminars, which have always been a great encouragement and strengthening for workers in Europe, can continue.

As many of you who saw us had heard this summer, our oldest daughter Rebecca has decided to take a break in her studies to return to Hildesheim and work with our youth group, which is currently a good-sized group. Through an arrangement with the local sports club, she has been able to do what is called here a "social volunteer year". She spends half her time coaching basketball in the club and at local schools, and the rest of her time working with our youth group. She has a lot of great ideas, and is getting the group off to a great start. She has already planned a girls night, and had a first-time visitor there, and next month she is planning with the youth an invite-your-friends evening at the church as well as a social project. We are thankful for her desire to serve the Lord and pour her energies into strengthening our youth and encouraging them to see how God can use them in positive ways! it is our prayer that the Lord will use her to open their hearts to Him and commit to being all they can be in His kingdom.



Here at the church, we have started an experiment together with a congregation in Peine, a town 25 miles away from Hildesheim. Six men from the two congregations have agreed to take turns teaching on the theme "Healing Grace" on Sunday mornings at the worship services of the two churches. The topics are being taken from a book, and they will be taught through the spring. This past Sunday we began the series with a combined worship service, and we had a man from Hildesheim, a friend of the Bratchers, who came to the service in Peine because the topic interested him. We are excited to have this opportunity to encourage each other in this practical way, and we are asking our Lord to use it to touch those in both towns who are in need of His healing grace!



On the personal side, we said farewell to our second daughter, Amanda, this summer. She finished her schooling here in June – giving us the opportunity to experience something new: the German version of graduation, including an evening ball! We are very proud of our daughter, who is now a student at Lipscomb University in Tennessee, majoring in Chemistry. Cindy remained in the States for three extra weeks in August to take Amanda to Nashville and to help her get moved into her dorm room. She has already made lots of friends and gone on her first little student "mission trip" to New Orleans. We are thankful for the

special daughter whom our Lord entrusted us with 19 years ago, and we are looking forward to what He has planned for her life! We are so richly blessed!

There are so many little ways in which our Lord continually reminds us that He is in control and He is good! One of those is all the good people He has placed in our lives, both here and in America. We are so very grateful for all the encouragement and supportive gestures we received during our time in the States this summer. We thank our Lord for each and every one of you. And even if we didn't get to see you this summer, we wish we could've!!

In Christ,

Don & Cindy